



State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: June 2nd, 2015
To: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Fr: Senator Sheila Harsdorf
Re: Senate Bill 153- Relating to the donation of abandoned or seized vehicles

Dear Chair Wanggaard and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 153 (SB 153), which seeks to allow vehicles that have been deemed abandoned to be donated by a sheriff's department to a non-profit organization.

Currently, if an abandoned vehicle is impounded, current law allows the municipality or county to dispose of an unclaimed impounded vehicle by sealed bid or auction sale as provided by ordinance. SB 153 will allow the municipality or county to donate an unclaimed impounded vehicle to a non-profit organization, either in lieu of the sale or if no acceptable bid is received.

This issue was brought to my attention by a VFW post in my district that collects donated vehicles to raise money for services and programs for veterans. A local sheriff said he would be willing to provide the VFW with vehicles his department had taken possession of that had been abandoned, but state statutes require the sheriff to sell or dispose of the vehicles. Law enforcement has also indicated that frequently abandoned vehicles have no value for sale and the law enforcement agency incurs towing costs for removing the vehicle from their possession. As a result, this legislation would not only provide a source of revenue for veterans groups and other non-profits, but would also reduce taxpayer costs.

At the request of the veterans we worked with in developing this legislation, a provision was added that would require that in order for veteran's organizations to qualify they would be required to spend at least 50% of their revenue on active duty military members, veterans, or their families.

I urge your support of this legislation which presents a win-win opportunity that has the positive impact of providing potential revenue for local community and veterans organizations while reducing costs for sheriff's departments that currently have to pay to have unclaimed vehicles towed away. I urge your support of SB 153 and thank you for your consideration.